

Today, Agriculture Committee Ranking Democrat Congressman Collin C. Peterson (MN-7) and Agriculture Committee Member Congressman Jim Costa (CA-20) introduced a bill that would extend the 2002 Farm Bill to provide certainty to farmers and to allow U.S. negotiators to focus on the ongoing Doha Development Round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

“At a time when American farmers continue to face uncertainty with record high energy and input costs, natural disasters, low prices for some commodities and continued cuts to farm programs, this bill assures that they can count on the Farm Bill to continue in its current form at least until we see what the Doha Round could mean for American agriculture,” Congressman Peterson said.

The Peterson-Costa bill extends the 2002 Farm Bill for one year. That would extend the Farm Bill's commodity title through crop year 2008 and would extend the remaining titles through either fiscal year or calendar year 2008, depending on their current expiration date. If the President does not submit implementing legislation based on the outcome of the Doha Round by January 15, 2008, there would be an additional one year extension.

“While pursuing free trade is critical to U.S. Agriculture, it also must be fair trade. An extension of the farm bill will both encourage our global trading partners to work toward a level playing field and give us time to analyze the outcome of the Doha Round before rewriting our own farm policy,” Congressman Costa said.

The extension will provide an incentive for U.S. trade negotiators to bring back the very best deal possible for American agriculture from those trade talks. It would ensure that the U.S. negotiators do not have to rush through the negotiating process in order to deliver a trade pact to Congress before a new Farm Bill is written.

“Extending the 2002 Farm Bill programs will allow us to write the next Farm Bill with a full understanding of the international trade picture to be sure that we are providing the best possible support to American agriculture,” Congressman Peterson said.

Joining Congressmen Peterson and Costa as original co-sponsors on this bill are

Representatives John Salazar (CO-3), Tim Holden (PA-17), G.K. Butterfield (NC-1), Bob Etheridge (NC-2), Stephanie Herseth (SD-AL), Joe Baca (CA-43), David Scott (GA-13), Mike McIntyre (NC-7), Lincoln Davis (TN-4), Earl Pomeroy (ND-AL), Charlie Melancon (LA-3); Henry Cuellar (TX-28), Jim Marshall (GA-3), John Barrow (GA-12), Leonard Boswell (IA-3).